

VZCZCXRO2955
RR RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3161/01 2630845
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 200845Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3473
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003161

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/19/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL BAUCUS DISCUSSES RECONCILIATION, SECURITY,
AND IRAN WITH VP TARIQ HASHIMI

REF: BAGHDAD 3097

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Patricia A. Butenis for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: In a meeting with Codel Baucus on September 16, Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi told the delegation that he does not think there will be true national reconciliation until the Shia and Kurds decide to compromise, particularly regarding power-sharing on security issues. He said he wants to see a less ideological Iraqi government (an allusion to the influence of Shi'a clerics), and mentioned a proposal he put together on key issues, which he is calling a "Magna Carta for Iraq." He advocated early elections and changing the elections law from a closed list to an open list system. On security issues, he complained that local volunteers employed by the Ministry of Interior in Anbar are not receiving salaries, equipment, or uniforms. He portrayed Iran as a threat, and said Tehran was influencing key pieces of legislation in Iraq. End summary.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

[¶2.](#) (C) Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), Ken Salazar (D-CO), Ben Nelson (D-NE), and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) met with VP Tariq al-Hashimi (a Sunni) on September 16 to discuss national reconciliation, security, and other issues. In response to Senator Baucus' question on the status of national reconciliation, VP Hashimi responded "if people are not prepared to compromise, there is no reconciliation." He added the "missing link is a common vision." He discussed the continued fear between the Sunnis and Shias and the fact that the Kurds don't want to make concessions to the central government on the hydrocarbons law. He noted there is too much "ideology" influencing the decision making in the GOI, alluding to the influence of Shi'a clerics on the Prime Minister's Office.

[¶3.](#) (C) VP Hashimi also said that "fresh leadership" is needed and the government is currently paralyzed, despite the recent leadership agreement and communique. He called for a broker to help the government reach "a new deal" and move the country forward both economically and politically. VP Hashimi encouraged the Codel to raise the issue of power-sharing, particularly on the security file (security related ministries and leadership positions) with PM Maliki in their meeting later in the day with him. He said "fighting against terrorism is a common goal and Sunnis and Kurds should be equal participants and consulted in the process."

VP HASHIMI'S VISION AND KEY ISSUES

[¶4.](#) (C) VP Hashimi said he is working on a project involving twenty "key issues" and that he hopes to release a document in the next few days. (Note: VP Hashimi and his staff have

dropped hints in previous meetings about this document, which Hashimi calls a "Magna Carta for Iraq." Post is working to obtain a copy. End Note). Hashimi expressed interest in changing the Constitution to permit early elections and to change the way the Prime Minister is selected.

¶15. (C) Hashimi also wants to change the elections law from a closed list system to an open list. He complained a significant problem with the closed list system is that members of the Council of Representatives (CoR) have no ties to their geographical constituency. At the same time, Hashimi conceded the political parties will all need to agree and that some representatives in the CoR may be reluctant to support this idea for fear that they may lose their positions. Hashimi also called for provincial elections and highlighted some of the problems of elections at the local provincial council level. He complained that some members will be reluctant to give up their seats on the provincial councils, but highlighted the fact there is only one Sunni on the fifty-five member Baghdad Provincial Council as a case of un-balanced representation.

SECURITY IN THE SUNNI PROVINCES

¶16. (C) VP Hashimi discussed his trip to Salah ad-Din on Saturday, September 15 and highlighted the improvement of security and mood of the people in the Sunni community in that region. He also mentioned his trip to Anbar, which he departed for after the Codel meeting. He complained Sunni local volunteers who have signed on with the Ministry of Interior are not being treated as equals. Specifically, they lack sufficient salaries (he claimed as many as 9,000 are going unpaid), weapons, uniforms, and logistical equipment.

BAGHDAD 00003161 002 OF 002

He added he is helping to "subsidize" some of the salaries in the absence of GOI support. He complained he raised this issue with PM Maliki on other occasions without any action.

¶17. (C) VP Hashimi said he was alarmed to hear of the recent killing of Sheikh Sattar al-Rishawi in Anbar province on Thursday, September 13 (reftel). He added that in order for there to be continued progress in Anbar Province and other areas, the tribes need to be strengthened and supported.

FUTURE OF IRAQ

¶18. (C) In response to Senator Salazar's question about the role the U.S. should play in the future of Iraq, VP Hashimi said U.S. forces are needed while Iraq strengthens its armed forces or it "will be chaos." He did not want to set a timetable for withdrawal, saying that should be left to the technocrats to negotiate. He also said militia members need to be purged from the armed forces, and complained that there are barely a handful of Sunnis at the central office of the Ministry of Interior. He urged the Iraqi armed forces be replaced with professionals. However, he stated there is no reform to date on the issue and commented this is an area under PM Maliki's control. VP Hashimi also called for approximately 300,000 members of the Iraqi Security Forces during the Saddam era to be allowed to return to the military. In total, Hashimi said one million soldiers were dismissed and most of these soldiers fled to Syria or Jordan because they lost their jobs and pensions.

CONCERNS OF IRAN

¶19. (C) When asked by Senator Baucus about Iran, VP Hashimi said Iranian influence is growing, particularly in Baghdad, and that Tehran is even influencing the legislation debated in the Iraqi parliament. He said the government has become "Pro-Iranian." Hashimi said that in the absence of a strong Iraqi Security Force, Iranian influence will "continue to

flourish and fill this security vacuum."

¶10. (U) Codel Baucus did not have an opportunity to clear this cable before departing Iraq.

BUTENIS